

# Legislation relating to the use of ICT

Laws passed by parliament are called **acts** or **legislation**. There are four acts you need to know about.

- 1** The **Data Protection Act (DPA)** protects us against misuse of our personal data that may be held by a range of organisations, for example shops, schools and businesses. These organisations must ensure that our personal data is:
1. processed **fairly and lawfully**
  2. obtained for **specified purposes**
  3. adequate, relevant and **not excessive**
  4. **accurate** and up to date
  5. **not kept longer than necessary**
  6. processed respecting the **rights of people**
  7. kept **secure**
  8. **not transferred outside Europe.**



New laws need to be introduced continually to keep up with the developments in technology.

- 2** The **Computer Misuse Act** covers the misuse of computer equipment and illegal access to files. This makes the following illegal and punishable by fines or imprisonment:
- software piracy (copying and distributing software illegally)
  - planting viruses
  - hacking
  - fraud.



- 3** The **Copyright, Designs and Patents Act** makes it a **criminal offence** to copy or steal media or other people's work or ideas. For example, it is illegal to:
- **copy or distribute** media without a proper licence or the copyright owner's permission
  - use purchased media on more computers than you have **licences** for.



- 4** The **Digital Economy Act** stops people illegally downloading media. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) can collect data about repeat offenders. If offenders continue downloading then their Internet access can be slowed or suspended.



## Worked example

Sally buys a music CD from an online store. Raj tells Sally that she can legally copy the CD because Sally has paid for it. Explain why Raj is incorrect. Sally's CD is for her own use. She cannot copy it without the copyright holder's permission. It is illegal to copy CDs in this way as stated in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act.



(2 marks)

## EXAM ALERT!

In similar questions, students have shown a poor knowledge of legislation. It is important to understand how laws protect our rights. Students have struggled with exam questions similar to this - **be prepared!**



## Now try this



- Which **one** of these requires ISPs to take action against people who illegally download media? (1 mark)
- A Data Protection Act       C Copyright, Designs and Patents Act
- B Computer Misuse Act       D Digital Economy Act

# Unequal access to ICT

The **digital divide** is the gap between people who do not have access to digital technology and those who do. Because of the importance of digital technology in our modern lives, those who do not have access to ICT can be disadvantaged in many ways.

## Causes of unequal access within the UK:

- Affordability** Those on low incomes may not have access to digital technology
- Disability or illness** can make it difficult for people to get access to ICT
- Lack of knowledge and skills** prevents people using ICT
- Cultural factors** - gender inequalities and religious beliefs can restrict access



## Causes of unequal access worldwide:

- Affordability** More wealthy countries have better access to digital technology
- Limited access to electricity** Countries without a reliable electrical supply have less access
- Censorship** Some governments restrict and censor access to digital technology



## Implications of the digital divide

- ### Economic
- People with good IT skills tend to get better paid jobs.
  - The Internet gives people access to a wider range of goods and services
  - Access to the Internet allows people to research products and get cheaper deals
  - The Internet has led to a rise in e-commerce and globalisation
  - Countries without good access to ICT are developing more slowly



- ### Educational
- Students who use computers tend to do better at school
  - People with access to online courses can improve their skills and knowledge
  - Students need technology to make the most of schools' personalised learning using VLEs



- ### Social
- People with access to email, mobile phones and social networking can keep in touch more regularly with friends and family
  - People can feel 'left out' if they do not have access to digital technology
  - Children with access to technology may play on games consoles rather than playing outside.



- ### Cultural
- Some religious groups restrict their members' access to digital technology
  - People may be stereotyped by gender: for example, boys and men may be given more access to, and education in, technology than girls and women